Panchayat roads in Vellarappalli and their maintenance.

113. Mr. K. P. Kannan Nayar.—Will the Government be pleased to inform this Council:—

(a) what amount has been sanctioned for the maintenance of the roads and lanes vested under the supervision of the Vellarappalli Group Panchayat;

(b) has there been any complaint that the amount is absolutely insufficient for the proper maintenance of the roads and lanes in question;

(c) is the Government aware that even the small amount now sanctioned for the work is not placed in time at the disposal of the said Panchayat to enable it to take up the work in time;

(d) is the Government aware that no maintenance of the roads in question has been taken up this year (1103) up till now. *i. e.*, 2nd Karkadagam 1103;

(e) is the Government aware that the condition of the said roads and lanes is absolutely unsatisfactory and that the condition of even the main road leading from Chewwara to Vellarappalli and from Vellarappalli to Malayattur is miserable?

Mr. I. Raman Menon.—(a) Rs. 760.

(b) Yes.

(c) The Government contribution to Panchayat works is not freely placed at their disposal. But they always advance sums for starting works and make further advances as they progress within the budget grant. This procedure is followed in the case of the Panchayat in question also.

(d) No.

(e) The information before the Government is that they are in a fairly good condition.

Mr. K. P. Kannan Nayar.—Referring to the last part of the question, may I know when that information was received by the Government? Is it after my questions were sent or any recent report received from any responsible individual as regards the condition of these roads there?

Mr. I. Raman Menon.—Well, I inspected all those roads in Edavam last.

Mr. K. P. Kannan Nayar.—So the last information received was in Edavam and not after that.

Mr. I. Raman Menon.—Yes.

Mr. C. Barton Wright.—May I say a few words before the business for the day is taken up?

President.—About what?

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Mr. C. Barton Wright.—About the general discussion on the budget.

Mr. A. K. Vengu Ayyar.—Is it a point of order?

Mr. C. Barton Wright.—No.

President.—Then I cannot allow you to speak.

Voting of Demands for Grants (*contd.*)

Demand No. XXI—Medical—Rs. 2,47, 176 (*contd.*)

Motion No. 2 (*contd.*)

Mr. A. B. Salem.—*To reduce the allotment of Rs. 1,00,000 for "cost of medicines, instruments," by Rs. 25,000.*

President.—We were considering Motions 2 and 11 under Medical yesterday. We will continue it. Any other Member wishing to speak?

Mr. C.A. Kunjunni Raja.—I rise to support this motion. The Hon'ble Member for Narakkal has definitely stated that his conclusion is that the Departmental Head is the best person to decide from whom and from where and at what price medicine should be purchased for the State hospitals and that it is unsafe to appoint a committee for the purchase of medicine. On the face of it, this proposition is baseless and cannot stand scrutiny, because, if we apply these principles to other Departments, the absurdity becomes self-evident. Why should in the P.W. D. any tender be invited for works, if the works could be given to anybody whom the Chief Engineer may choose on whatever rates the Chief Engineer may like. So also in the Excise Department, if shops could be given at whatever rentals the Superintendent may choose and to whomsoever he likes, there will be a fall of the revenue. The Government was not inviting tenders for salt and this Council wanted open tenders to be invited and during the last year we find there is a considerable reduction in the rate of salt.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—The Excise Department was inviting tenders even before the Legislative Council came into existence.

Mr. C. A. Kunjunni Raja.—Even with tenders, you were managing to give the work to the same contractor Mr. Chettiar for a long period before this Council. Anyhow there are several other Departments where this principle, enunciated by the Member for Narakkal, cannot be applied usefully. For instance, why should you not authorise the Conservator of Forests to sell timber at whatever price he likes and to whomsoever he chooses? why not authorise the Diwan Peishkar to assign lands to whomsoever he likes on rates he may choose? I submit this is a proposition which cannot be accepted. Moreover, there is another difficulty. Here the person who purchases and who distributes the medicine is one and the same individual. In

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